



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Ed Maddox 213-974-2222
James Bolden 213-200-5314

SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS APPLAUDS BOARD'S APPROVAL OF PROGRAM TO PROVIDE ADVOCACY FOR PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY DISABLED GENERAL RELIEF & SSI PARTICIPANTS

LOS ANGELES – Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today applauded the Board's approval of a pilot program to identify one community-based organization (CBO) or a consortium of CBOs to assist General Relief (GR) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Medi-Cal Advocacy Program (SSIMAP) advocates in providing SSI services to GR participants who are physically and mentally disabled.

Currently, SSI advocacy services are offered in all 14 County Department of Public and Social Services' (DPSS) GR District Offices, where advocates assist participants with completing and filing the SSI application, connecting them to necessary supportive services, and if needed, initiating referrals to a health or mental health provider for services.

With over 23,474 documented cases, the Second Supervisorial District has the highest concentration of homelessness in Los Angeles. Additionally, nearly four out of every 10 GR recipients live in the Second District.

"The South Special Welfare Office has the largest General Relief caseload of any other in the County, with more than 17,000 cases," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said.

"As a result, the South Special Office must play a pivotal role as a partner in both the County's and Second District's efforts to end homelessness. Its vital that it's GR to SSI efforts are successful."

On February 9, the Board approved a comprehensive plan to restructure the GR Program, which enhanced the program to serve the County's indigent population, with the collaboration of various County departments.

Two weeks ago the Supervisor visited the South Special Office to see first hand how the pilot program was progressing in its goal to provide SSI advocacy assistance through a team approach. The objective is to increase the number and percentage of SSI approvals, which equals 19% of the County's total GR caseload.

The plan includes the development of a pilot project for contractors to provide SSI advocacy assistance, in collaboration with GR and SSIMAP advocates, to disabled GR participants in the area served by the South Special DPSS Office.

The South Special SSI Advocacy pilot will involve L.A. County partnering with a CBO or collaborative, along with a medical/mental health provider to assist 50% of the GR SSIMAP advocates in providing case management, advocacy services, and on-site medical/mental health evaluations.

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